

THE

ל'פ"ח

SHEKEL



The Journal of Israel and Jewish History and Numismatics
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RISKING ALL

**NEW MEDAL
HONORS RESNIK,
HOFFMAN**



- *Secret WWII P.O. W. camp critical to Allied victory*
- *Elie Wiesel's extraordinary legacy*
- *Passing of two titans: Peres, Cohen*
- *Judaea Capta type coin sets auction record*

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Officers

Mel Wacks, President and Editor-in-Chief
*Contact Mel via E-mail: ainapresident@gmail.com
or call him: (818) 225-1348*
Josh Prottas, Vice-President
Donna Sims, Treasurer
Aaron Oppenheimer, Secretary

General Contact

Donna Sims, P.O. Box 20255, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269
E-mail: dancinazdonna@gmail.com

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Editor: *The Shekel*

Andrew Peralá, PO Box 6626, Kamuela, HI 96743
E-mail: aperala@aol.com

Editorial Board:

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ANDREW PERALA, EDITOR

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CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS NUMISMATICALLY

I wish every AINA member the Happiest of Holiday Seasons and a Happy 2017. I know that next year will be a memorable one for AINA—we will celebrate AINA's 50th Anniversary and will publish Volume 50 of *The Shekel*.

There is no way but numismatics to bring the original events that we celebrate in December to life, for there are 2000 year-old coins readily available for \$25 to \$100, depending on quality. These make great gifts for yourself, family members or friends, and might encourage the start of a hobby that can give a lifetime of pleasure.

And don't forget to contact our advertisers to start or add to your collection.

Shown are small bronze coins, generally called prutahs, leptons or mites. The first was issued by John Hyrcanus I (ruled from 134-104 BCE), the son of Simon Maccabeus (High Priest from 142-135 BCE)—who was one of the five sons of Mattathias Maccabeus, leader of the rebellion that resulted in the holiday of Chanukah.

The second coin was issued by Herod the Great, King of Judaea from 37-4 BCE. According to the New Testament, three magi from the East visited Herod to inquire the whereabouts of "the one having been born king of the Jews," because they had seen his star in the east and therefore wanted to pay him homage - the first Christmas.

Long-time *Shekel* advertiser Ira Goldberg has offered to send AINA members a free catalog featuring some of the highest quality coins of the First and Second (Bar Kochba) Revolts ever auctioned. Call (310) 551-2646 to obtain the free auction

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Prutah of John Hyrcanus I, ruled 134-104 BCE.



Image courtesy VCOINS.com

A "First Christmas" prutah of Herod the Great, ruled 37-4 BCE.

catalog of the Brody Family Collection of Ancient Jewish Coins, which will be sold by Goldberg Auctioneers during their New York Sale from January 10-12, 2017.

I sincerely thank all of our members for their continued support - whether it has been for five, 10, 20, or all of our 50 years of existence.

If you have not already done so, please renew your membership now. We have many surprises coming in 2017 that you won't want to miss, including our 50th Anniversary medal.

All the best,

Mel

MEDALS HONOR TWO WHO BRAVED SPACE



HEROIC ASTRONAUTS INDUCTED INTO JEWISH-AMERICAN HALL OF FAME



Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman is depicted repairing the Hubble telescope; the remote-control mechanical arm that Dr. Judith Resnik specialized in can be seen to his left. Dr. Resnik is portrayed holding her helmet; Haley's comet - which she was scheduled to photograph - is in the background. Designed by Eugene Daub, and minted by Medallic Art Company.

BY MEL WACKS

The newest medal in the Jewish-American Hall of Fame series honors two heroic American astronauts - Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman and Dr. Judith Resnik - who are the JAHF 2016 inductees.

Designed by Eugene Daub, mintages are limited to 150 bronze (2 ½ oz.), 75 pure silver (nearly 3 oz.) and 35 gold-plated pure silver (nearly 3 oz.) 2-inch diameter medals, each

Continued

NEW 2016 JAHF MEDAL NOW AVAILABLE

Continued

individually serial numbered. They are available for contributions of \$50 per bronze, \$200 per silver and \$250 per gold-plated silver medal to the

non-profit Jewish-American Hall of Fame. AINA members can take a 20 percent discount. Orders will be accepted on a first come—first served basis by calling 818-225-1348. ☐

Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman (b.1944)

When Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman read a book saying that no Jew has ever been an astronaut or will ever be an astronaut, Hoffman decided to prove that wrong. He moved to Houston, and became the first astronaut to log over 1,000 hours in space; Hoffman went up into the firmament five times (logging over 20 million miles), including a mission to fix the Hubble telescope.

On one flight, he went up 400 miles at a speed of 18,000 mph--with six other crew members--to repair the Hubble in September 1993. He has described the cramped spaceship quarters, the two-hour process of suiting up, the meticulous work of repairing the telescope with power tools ("It's a little like working on your car"), free-floating in space, going from day to night every 90 minutes, and looking back at the colored marble that is planet Earth. It was an essential mission, because if the Hubble were not repaired, it could not have sent back the amazing images that have altered our knowledge of the universe.

The Hubble mission occurred during Chanukah, and so Hoffman took along a dreidel (a Chanukah top). Images were sent back to mission control, so he decided to explain



Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman (born 1944)

what a dreidel was. He went on TV, talking about Chanukah and spinning the dreidel to demonstrate the game. The little top floated magically in the cabin, suspended in mid-air. Dr. Hoffman has said: "I thoroughly hope that when humans go to settle Mars, Jews will go too and bring their Jewishness. It's part of what makes the world holy and we should bring it wherever we go."

Since 2002, Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman has been a Professor of the Practice in the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. ☐

Continued



The STS-51-L crewmembers designed this Mission Patch to represent their participation in NASA's mission aboard the Challenger, from launch to soaring into space. Among the prescribed duties of the five astronauts and two payload specialists were to be the observation and photography of Halley's Comet, backdropped against the U.S. flag in the insignia. Surnames of the crewmembers encircle the scene, with the payload specialists recognized below. Surname of the first teacher in space, Sharon Christa McAnliffe, is followed by a symbolic apple. Authentic Reproduction Mission Patch purchased at the (Neil) Armstrong Air & Space Museum, Wapakoneta, Ohio, in 2006.



Designed by the crew members, the STS- 61 crew insignia depicts the astronaut symbol superimposed against the sky with the Earth underneath. Also seen are two circles representing the optical configuration of the Hubble Space Telescope. According to the crewmembers, "The light brings to us on Earth knowledge about planets, stars, galaxies and other celestial objects, allowing us to better understand the complex physical processes at work in the universe." The Space Shuttle Endeavour is also represented as the fundamental tool that allows the crew to perform the first servicing of the Hubble Space Telescope so its scientific deep space mission may be extended for several years to come.

Continued

Dr. Judith Resnik (1949-1986)

One of the seven crew members who died in the tragic explosion of the space shuttle Challenger on January 28, 1986, Judith (“J.R.”) Resnik was a pioneer for women entering NASA’s space program, and the second American woman astronaut to travel in space.

Resnik was accepted to Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie-Mellon) in Pittsburgh, where she majored in electrical engineering. After graduating in 1970, she moved to New Jersey, where Resnik was employed in the missile and surface radar division of RCA.

She later received her master’s degree in engineering from the University of Maryland, and began work on her Ph.D. while employed as a biomedical engineer in the neurophysics lab at the National Institutes of Health.

In 1977, while she was finishing work on her doctorate, NASA began recruiting minorities and women to the space program. Though Resnik had never shown particular interest in the space program, she decided to apply.

After receiving academic honors for her doctoral work in electrical engineering, she continued to train for the NASA tryouts. In 1978, at age 29, Resnik was one of six women accepted into the program.

During her first six years at



Dr. Judith Resnik (1949-1986)

NASA, Resnick specialized in the operation of a remote-control mechanical arm that moved objects located outside the spacecraft.

In 1984, on her first space flight on the shuttle Discovery, Resnik was responsible for unfurling a 102-foot-long solar sail, which, on future missions, would be used to capture the sun’s energy power the spacecraft and its experiments.

NASA’s Challenger, Flight 51-L, was Resnik’s second space launch on January 28, 1986. Her mission: assist the observations and photography of Halley’s comet.

But tragedy struck, and ended her mission and her life. Seventy-three seconds into the flight, the space shuttle exploded in midair due to hydrogen leakage caused by faulty O-ring seals.

Along with her six crew members, Resnik died in one of the worst space disasters in history. ☐

TWO VARIETIES OF JAHF RESNIK MEDAL

*COLLECTORS NOTE: ORIGINAL PLASTER DESIGN'S
RAISED LINE MISSING IN MOST OF THE MEDALS*



Above left: Error medal with no line in helmet. Above right: Corrected medal with curved line in back of helmet. At right: The original plaster model shows the line at the back of the helmet. The corrected version of the medals were struck in only 30 bronze, five silver and three gold-plated silver medals.

BY MEL WACKS

The Jewish-American Hall of Fame medal honoring Astronaut Judith Resnik depicts her holding her clear helmet.

The original plaster model had an incused curved line in the lower part of the helmet, representing the hole that enables her to place the helmet over her head.

However, when the die was made by transferring the design from the original plaster, somehow that curved line disappeared - and so the first 100 bronze (serial nos. 001-100), 55 silver (nos. 01-55), and 28 gold-plated silver (nos. 01-28) med-



als are missing this line. After this error was discovered, the curved line was engraved into the die.

Due to the error, only small numbers of corrected medals were made - 30 bronze (nos. 101-130), five silver (nos. 56-60), and three gold-plated silver (nos. 29-31). Since the line was incused into the die, it appears raised on the medals. ▢



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JUDAEA CAPTA TYPE AUREUS SELLS FOR \$300,000-PLUS

*EXAMPLE HAS SIMILAR OBVERSE
BUT DIFFERENT REVERSE
FROM AUREUS SOLD
IN KÜNKER 2012 AUCTION*

The gold aureus that just sold, obverse below and reverse at right, was struck circa 71 CE during the rule of Vespasian (69-79 CE).

The \$300,000-plus auction price was a record, realized Sept. 2016 by Fritz Rudolph Künker auctions.

In March 2012, Künker sold another rare type of Vespasian Judaea Capta aureus, reverse shown at right and obverse similar to above, but struck one year later in 72 CE in Lugdunum. Extremely Fine. Estimated at 12,500 euros, it realized 135,000 euros, or about \$182,000 U.S. (Sizes not to scale)



The star of Fritz Rudolph Künker's auction on Sept. 26, 2016 in Osnabrück, Germany, was a circa 71 CE gold aureus of Vespasian, who ruled the Roman Empire from 69 to 79 CE.

The coin, graded EF (according to the auction firm), realized a hammer price of €300,000 (\$336,642 U.S.), 10 times its pre-sale estimate.

Vespasian helped rebuild Rome and expand the empire, leveraging propaganda (and taxes) to achieve his goals. The coin in the Künker sale was struck at Lugdunum (modern day Lyon, France), and shows the ruler in a right-facing portrait with a

laurel wreath on the obverse.

The reverse, depicting Judaea bound, head hung in shame, with an inscription *JUDAEA DEVICTA*, honors Vespasian's successful campaign against the tiny Jewish nation.

A similar aureus with the same obverse but a different reverse was sold by Künker in 2012.

The coin is part of a series of coins issued across 25 years by Vespasian and his two sons who succeeded him as emperor, Titus and Domitian.

The design is more readily available as a silver denarius, but less so on a gold aureus. ☐

NERO AUREUS DISCOVERY BREAKS GROUND



*AUREUS STRUCK 56/57 CE
1ST OF ITS TYPE TO BE FOUND
IN A JERUSALEM
ARCHEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION*

*Photograph by Shimon Gibson
A Roman gold coin depicting the Emperor
Nero, dated to 56 CE was discovered in
summer, 2016 at University of North Caro-
lina Charlotte's archaeological excavation
at Jerusalem's Mt. Zion.*

The discovery of a rare gold coin bearing the image of the Roman Emperor Nero at an archaeological excavation on Mount Zion in Jerusalem was the numismatic highlight of the 2016 digging season, according to archeologists from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The three archaeologists in charge of the project, Drs. Shimon Gibson, James Tabor, and Rafael Lewis made the joint announcement.

“The coin is exceptional,” said Gibson, “because this is the first time that a coin of this kind has turned up in Jerusalem in a scientific dig. Coins of this type are usually only found in private collections, where we don’t have clear evidence as to place of origin.”

The gold coin (aureus) bears the bare-headed portrait of the young Nero as Caesar. The lettering around the edge of the coin reads: NERO CAESAR AVG IMP. On the reverse of the coin is a depiction of an oak wreath containing the letters “EX S C,” with the surrounding inscription “PONTIF MAX TR P III.” Importantly, these inscriptions help to work

out the date when the coin was struck as 56/57 CE. Identification of the coin was made by the historian and numismatist, Dr. David Jacobson from London.

The obverse inscription NERO CAESAR AVG IMP” declares “Nero Caesar Augustus Imperator” according to Jane Sancinito, a Ph.D. candidate in Ancient History at the University of Pennsylvania who specializes in Roman imperial and Byzantine numismatics.

Sancinito was quoted in an article in *Bible History Daily*. The coin’s reverse inscription has an oak wreath surrounding the letters “EX S C” (Ex Senatus Consulto—“by order of the Senate”) and is itself surrounded by the inscription “PONTIF MAX TR P III” (Pontifex Maximus Tribunicia Potestas III). Pontifex Maximus means ‘greatest priest,’ and it was the most important religious position in Rome,” Sancinito said.

The coin dates to a little more than a decade before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE, and

Continued

*Image courtesy
American Numismatic Society*
A gold aureus of Nero shows the
same reverse, but with a differ-
ent obverse portrait, found on the
aureus discovered at Mt. Zion in
Jerusalem in 2016. The site is a
major archeological excavation
lead by three archeologists from
the University of North Carolina-
Charlotte.



Continued

was found in rubble material outside the ruins of the 1st Century Jewish villas the team has been excavating.

The team has hypothesized that the large houses may have belonged to wealthy members of the priestly caste, and it may have come from one of their stores of wealth.

“The coin probably came from one of the rich 2,000-year old Jewish dwellings which the UNC Charlotte team have been uncovering at the site,” said Gibson.

“These belonged to the priestly and aristocratic quarter located in the Upper City of Jerusalem. Finds include the well-preserved rooms of a very large mansion, a Jewish ritual pool (mikveh) and a bathroom, both with their ceilings intact.”

The mansion survived in part the utter destruction wreaked on others like it by Titus and the Roman legions, when Jerusalem was razed to the ground.

It is likely, the archeologists said, that due to the intrinsic value of the gold coin it was hidden away ahead of the destruction of the city, and was missed by the marauding and looting Roman soldiers.

“It’s a valuable piece of personal property and wouldn’t have been cast away like rubbish or casually dropped. It’s conceivable that it ended

up outside these structures in the chaos that happened as this area was destroyed.”

The image of Nero is significant in that it shows the presence of the Roman occupation and provides a clear late date for the occupation of the residences.

There is no historical evidence that Nero ever visited Jerusalem. Tabor pointed out that the coin is dated “to the same year of St. Paul’s last visit to Jerusalem, which resulted in his arrest (on the charge of taking Gentiles into the Temple) and incarceration in Caesarea.” Last of the Julio-Claudian line, Nero was Roman emperor for 14 years (54-68 CE). He had the reputation for being a tyrant, and some believed he was responsible for the devastating fire of 64 CE, which resulted in the burning of much of Rome. While the image of Nero fiddling while Rome burned is an contemporary myth, the fire cleared the way for the emperor’s grandiose vision of building a grand palace in the heart of Rome.

Work at the site is scheduled to resume in 2017. ▢

Source: University of North Carolina at Charlotte. “Rare Roman gold coin found in Jerusalem at Mt. Zion archaeological dig.” ScienceDaily, 13 September 2016.

UNCOMMON INTELLIGENCE

'PO BOX 1142' - THE SECRET WWII P.O.W. CAMP THAT CHANGED THE WORLD



Photo courtesy National Park Service

In 2007, veterans of Fort Hunt who served as intelligence workers got together for a reunion. They were honored and recognized for their contributions while serving at P.O. Box 1142, and a flagpole and plaque was placed in Fort Hunt for the first time since WWII. This reunion was the first time many of the details of their work became public.

Ret. Maj. Arnold Kohn's extraordinary insider's story of Project Paperclip, Fort Hunt, Virginia, and the secret POW camp that changed the world.

BY MARK C. ANDERSON

Ret. Maj. Arnold Kohn, a former intelligence officer who helped keep so many critical national secrets hidden for so long, would just as soon keep things quiet now. While soldiers of his era have enjoyed waves of ceremonies, Kohn, who lives in Pacific Grove, has seen no such honor. He doesn't seem to mind. As he tells his story, he says that he'd prefer not to be identified.

"Can you just call me your Source?" he asks.

The secrets he guarded for more than half a century tie into some of the most momentous events in recent US history: the end of World War II, the major maneuvers of the Cold War, and the success of the NASA space program.

Only recently were the government documents describing the secret POW camp where he worked near the tail end of World War II declassified. And only recently, nearing the end of his life, did he decide to share what he had locked in his mind with people outside his trusted inner circle.

Kohn doesn't focus much on the

Continued



This colorized U.S. fifty-cent coin appeared at the time of the Fort Hood Veterans Reunion in 2007 and was initially available online for \$7.95.

Continued

fact that he was an important figure in one of the most important intelligence operations the country has known, that he helped win a race against the Russians to capture and then recruit the top scientists in Germany, or that he played a role in transforming Nazi scientists into key contributors to American society. Nor does he dwell on the fact that his experience gives him a rare perspective on the current national debate about the treatment of captured enemy combatants. Kohn prefers to focus on life's humorous ironies, in his own irreverent way.

Kohn has written a three-volume personal memoir (unpublished) describing his remarkable life and military career. Even here, he doesn't seek to define a decisive

record of what he has experienced. His purpose, instead, seems to have been to entertain his wife of 60 years, Helen, who once held her own top-secret clearance at the POW camp: "As long as Helen was laughing," he says, "I kept writing."

He writes in the epilogue: "Several times during the period in which I was writing these words I would find myself questioning my reasons for doing so... Do I expect, or really want, anyone to read this? I am not sure that I really do. If they did they might miss the joke."

Sitting on the couch in his Asilomar home, he is surrounded by cultural artifacts from the diverse posts where the Army stationed Helen and him. The kitchen is a wood-paneled transplant from Bavaria; the

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Shoji-styled sliding doors leading to the bedrooms were inspired by their time on Okinawa; and a set of elegant carved-wood chess figurines are the work of a noted German craftsman. Kohn patiently blinks his eyes – one blind and a stunning cloud of silver and blue, the other clear and penetrating – and down-plays the significance of what took place during the final throes of the last World War.

“I have a bias about certain things,” he says. “One is flag waving. The other is so-called ‘heroes.’ In combat, I would have sat on anyone who thought he was going to be a hero – he gets people killed.”

Kohn, who turned 90 this summer, speaks in a steady tone that reflects his desire to interpret events as he has always seen them: as no big deal – just him doing his job.

Two National Parks Service rangers working hard to preserve a key chapter in Kohn’s story don’t see him as anything less than a hero. Vincent Santucci and Brandon Bies are compiling the story of the secret POW camp known to its soldiers only by its code name, “PO Box 1142.” They and Bies clearly love the unlikely charge they have been given as park rangers at George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) in Virginia.

“Our job,” Santucci says, “is to protect and preserve the natural, historical and cultural resources of our country.” That duty took Santucci and Bies, GWMP’s chief ranger and cultural resource specialist, respectively, down an atypical trail recently, one that ultimately led one

of their colleagues from Alexandria to Asilomar to interview Kohn.

For them, the quest began with a plan to install a series of panels describing the history of Fort Hunt Park, which sits along the Parkway. The panels would describe the fort’s Native American heritage, its time as George Washington’s home, and its spell as a World War II military post. Their research into the post, which they knew as a standard-issue POW camp called Fort Hunt, led to one tight-lipped officer who worked there and resolutely refused to speak on the subject. The old soldier still honored a secrecy oath he had made 60 years ago, because he believed its revelation could jeopardize military operations taking place today. The rangers feared that their research was over.

A year and a half later, however, a park visitor triggered the project’s relaunch.

“We assumed there was no one left to talk to,” says Bies, an avid military historian and expert archaeologist equally comfortable giving tours at GWMP as he is digging through an avalanche of historical documents. “Fortunately we were mistaken. During a regular history tour, one woman said, ‘My next-door neighbor was an interrogator at Fort Hunt; he might be willing to speak with you.’ The information he had was absolutely unbelievable.”

The woman’s neighbor gave the rangers their first hint that very important activities had taken place at Fort Hunt. He told Bies and Santucci about a submarine that had been sent by the Third Reich, nearing defeat, to Japan to continue the

Continued

P.O. BOX 1142

THIS FLAGPOLE IS DEDICATED TO THE VETERANS OF P.O. BOX 1142 WHO SERVED THIS COUNTRY AS MEMBERS OF TWO MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (MIS) PROGRAMS DURING WORLD WAR II. THEIR TOP SECRET WORK HERE AT FORT HUNT NOT ONLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE ALLIED VICTORY, BUT ALSO LED TO STRATEGIC ADVANCES IN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE AND SCIENTIFIC TECHNOLOGY THAT DIRECTLY INFLUENCED THE COLD WAR AND SPACE RACE. THE MIS-X PROGRAM COMMUNICATED WITH AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL HELD CAPTIVE BY THE ENEMY AXIS FORCES AND ATTEMPTED TO COORDINATE THEIR ESCAPE. THE LARGER MIS-Y PROGRAM CARRIED OUT THE INTERROGATION OF NEARLY 4,000 ENEMY PRISONERS OF WAR AND SCIENTISTS WHO WERE PROCESSED AT THIS CAMP.

Bronze plaque dedicated to the U.S. personnel who worked at P.O. Box 1142.

Continued

war against the Allies. The sub was stuffed with some of the world's most advanced tools of war: V-1 rockets – which had redefined the range and accuracy of missiles; parts for the best fighter jet in Germany; and a store of uranium oxide. More importantly, the sub also contained several high-ranking German technological experts.

When the Nazis acknowledged defeat, the sub's captains aborted their mission in favor of surrendering to the US, and the scientists onboard were sent to Fort Hunt to describe what they knew of Germany's war technology – which was superior to anything the US had, especially in terms of rocketry and submarines.

"We had thought Fort Hunt was everyday interrogations," Bies says. "We had no idea."

Reenergized, Bies and Santucci's next stop was the U.S. National Archives in Maryland.

"We met with the staff," Santucci recalls. "They showed us a lot of recently declassified information and

said, 'You have a big undertaking – there's 742 boxes of information.' "

As the rangers began sifting through the boxes, they noticed something striking about the identity of the POWs listed in the camp's documents.

"In the tens of hundreds of individual forms, transcripts of interviews, mugshots, photos, background, psycho-profiling," Santucci says, "we were looking at the highest ranking officers, party leaders and scientists of Germany.

"We said, 'This is not a typical cross-section of POWs.' "

Among the prisoners was Dr. Wernher Von Braun. Before arriving at PO Box 1142 he was the foremost mind behind German rocketry. Later, as a naturalized US citizen, he would run NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, design the super-booster that took Saturn V to the moon, and eventually earn a reputation as the father of the American space program.

Other less prominent scientists

Continued

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also made impacts, particularly in aerospace – a former SS officer named Kurt Debus served as director of the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral. Others won Nobel Prize nominations and a National Medal of Science. Some worked on the Manhattan Project. Still others were assigned posts throughout the private sector and in each branch of the military.

Santucci and Bies realized that the story of PO Box 1142 was huge.

With the help of volunteers, the rangers began to track the former prisoners with the hopes of completing the history of the camp, and also began going through the list of the 350 people that worked there. As they searched, a sense of urgency grew – many, including the most knowledgeable senior officers, were already dead. Maybe a dozen officers, Bies estimates, are still alive. They've located only two. Getting to those officers quickly became a top priority.

"We have the opportunity to preserve the unheard stories of one of the most important moments in our country's history," says Bies, who has spearheaded the interview process. "We are only going to have that opportunity for a short time. This is our only chance."

The secrets of Fort Hunt didn't unlock easily for Arnold Kohn either. When he first reported for duty in 1946, just months after the end of WWII, simply reaching the base was a challenge.

"When I first got my orders, I was down in Louisiana," Kohn recalls. "They told me to report to PO Box

1142 in Alexandria, Virginia.

"I wasn't sure just what to do with PO Box 1142 so I went to the Post Office and spoke to the postmaster. He hemmed and hawed and finally said, 'Take a bus to Mount Vernon and tell the driver to drop you off at PO Box 1142.' The bus driver stopped. I got off and there was a little road with a private entrance that said, 'No Trespassing.'"

At this point, Kohn was a seasoned first lieutenant, with broad experience born of assignments that had taken him all over Europe to North Africa. He received the assignment because he had extensive experience working POW camps and because he could speak German fluently.

Only he didn't know just what his assignment was. His memoirs, which he has shared only with a small circle of family and close friends, illustrate how bizarre a situation he found himself in.

"We left our young hero bravely marching up a private road, somewhere in Virginia. Again and again, he anxiously checks his assignment orders. It is almost as if he needs to reassure himself that he hasn't misread them. No, they still read that he is to report to PO Box 1142. There is no mistake. But he wonders why he never seems to get normal orders like everybody else.

"There must be some element of strangeness in him to account for all the out of the ordinary events that kept on befalling him – this person who was myself so long long ago. We almost get the feeling that if something really surprising were to again happen to him, we wouldn't

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— so to speak — be very surprised. Though this fact, if one stops to think about it — that we wouldn't be surprised by a surprise — is actually surprising in itself; and also a little sad."

Observant by design and training, Arnold Kohn soon noticed a difference beyond Fort Hunt's whisper-quiet secrecy. These men surrounding him weren't regular enlisted men; they were Ivy League professors versed in intelligence. Among them were also soldiers who had escaped enemy capture to share key intel — which made Kohn glad he hadn't volunteered his comparatively tame war stories. But just like the National Parks employees, he would have to unravel the enigmatic character of PO Box 1142 by doing his own reconnaissance. It took a few weeks.

"Behind the screen of trees was a prisoner of war camp, or rather a secret interrogation center," Kohn writes. "The main post, which I had thought was all there was to the place, turned out to be less than a quarter of the whole area.

"Captured Personnel and Material Branch was known as the MIS-Y Section. When I tried to find out more about this interrogation center I was sternly told that this information came under the category of 'need to know.'

"I had been in the army long enough by now to have learned how to find out military secrets. I went and asked the cooks in the mess hall; and over our coffee they told me all the really neat secret stuff."

The neat stuff included tales of



German rocket scientist Werner von Bruan, in arm cast, as he surrenders to Allied forces near the end of WWII. The most famous scientist in the Nazi effort to create war rockets was interrogated at Fort Hunt and would eventually lead U.S. rocket development that would take American astronauts to the moon and back.

how Fort Hunt interrogations yielded the science needed to beat the U-boats' sonar proof skin, to pick apart German defense technologies, and to strategically explore Germany and Japan's sophistication in nuclear arms and other weapons.

Some such insights emerged from the second operation at work at Fort Hunt besides MIS-Y: MIS X. Dubbed an "escape innovation" workshop by some, MIS X allowed American and English POWs to communicate with radios slyly smuggled in care packages, or to escape altogether with the aid of

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devices like silk composite maps hidden in decks of playing cards that, when laid out, showed a route to freedom and a chance to relay vehicle flaws or new reconnaissance.

Of course, PO Box 1142 had a lot more secrets in store.

Kohn soon learned that the interrogation camp was undergoing a shift in strategy that corresponded to the larger military machine's shift from winning WWII to positioning for the quickly accelerating Cold War.

During WWII, Fort Hunt primarily processed U-boat crew members who had survived the sinking of their submarines in the Atlantic Ocean, seeking to decipher the maneuvers and machinery that gave the Germans a decisive advantage in the world's waters, as well as downed German pilots.

As the war drew to a close, PO Box 1142 shifted its aim to interrogating captured physicists, engineers and rocket scientists.

Because Germany was now a badly wounded nation, racked by poverty and hunger – and because the scientists saw a chance to elude capture by the Russians (as Bies points out, “Around 1 million German POWs died in Russian captivity”) – most were willing prisoners. In fact, many even negotiated contracts to share their knowledge and expertise in exchange for an annual stipend and guaranteed safekeeping for their families.

But they also came illegally. Initially the Red Cross was not notified of their presence in the U.S. (in accordance with international law) until they had already passed

through Fort Hunt; later, they were brought in under military custody so visas wouldn't be needed.

Therein lay another reason for secrecy – beyond the big, obvious strategic reasons for the Army and Navy to keep what they were learning about weapons, fighter planes, wind turbines and diesel engines from their Russian rivals.

National security was one thing, national outrage another: The country might not have taken well to Nazi party members being smuggled into the United States and funneled through Fort Hunt into American society.

Kohn would later be the point man personally responsible for taking the German POWs from the arrival port and past U.S. Customs. First, he had to learn to understand why their escape from Germany and illegal chance to resettle in the U.S. helped create a convivial interrogation scenario that, in today's modern climate of kidnapping and torture stories, seems hard to believe.

Santucci says he has focused on these issues with Kohn's former colleagues. “The interrogation technique is something we spent a lot of time talking with these men about,” Santucci says. “We've gotten a consensus. Most of the German prisoners were officers, scientists, likely from aristocracy, the wealthier, more educated portion of society, happy that they're off frontline and being treated fairly decently by Americans.

“In Russia they'd be dead by now, by and large, so they were much at ease. ‘I'm not going to die' kind of relieved. So they tended to cooper-

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ate.”

But that didn’t mean that old loyalties weren’t in play. Not every former German officer who came to the U.S. was eager to burp up the keys to his country’s rich expertise at their sworn enemy’s beckoning.

But PO Box 1142 had a pair of techniques that effectively drew this invaluable information out. In his

memoirs, Kohn describes those tools as “the real secret about PO Box 1142” and “a little practical joke.”

The secret lay in the ceilings of the prisoners’ quarters and in the trees around them.

“Every foot of the network of paths

that threaded these woods where the paroled prisoners were allowed to walk was covered by the most technically advanced microphones,” Kohn writes. “Every word spoken in the interrogation rooms, in the prisoners’ rooms, in the cabins where some special prisoners lived, in the bathrooms (even if the water was left running) could be overheard, monitored and recorded.”

Knowing this, interrogators could skirt around topics they were truly interested in – for instance, the anti-sonar coating on the hulls of the German U-boats – asking about everything but that (hull construction, anti-fouling paint, and so on) – and patiently laying a trap that would, with patience, net everything

they really needed. Eventually, the more stubborn prisoners would talk with a roommate in their cabin or a comrade in the woods, their vital intel fed to a building completely camouflaged beneath a mound of dirt and shrubs.

The practical joke, meanwhile, went by the name of Iwanowski, and looked as mean and ugly as Russian soldiers could come. “The

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TORED AND RECORDED’

- MAJ. ARNOLD KOHN,

RET.

information we were able to get from prisoners was certainly not – as far as I know – because any of them were tortured or even mistreated. Unless the little practical joke that Captain Iwanowski liked to play on them could be called

mistreatment,” Kohn writes.

“Iwanowski had been born and raised in Ohio and knew only the few words of Russian he had learned from his parents, but he sure looked Russian. (Especially when he wore the uniform of a Russian officer.) His ‘office,’ when the occasion called for it, was deep underground in what had been the ammunition bunkers. ‘Uncooperative’ German prisoners were told that the Americans were giving up on them and were turning them over to the Russians: one glance at Iwanowski’s ugly Mongolian face, lit-up with a theatrical colored spot light, waiting at the bottom of the steep, wet, moss-covered, concrete stairs, slapping his riding crop

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against his boots, with the recorded sound effects of groans and screams of agony, was usually all it took for a prisoner to want to talk to the ‘nice Americans.’ ”

Santucci and Bies are unequivocal about the results of this sly operation.

“As we learned American history in school, we weren’t presented with all of the facts,” Santucci

says. “Some of those facts are coming to light with our research with the veterans of 1142. America did not become a world power simply by the way we shot our rifles and maneuvered our tanks, but by the way we acquired defense and scientific technologies from top German military and scientists. That’s tied to [Operation] Paperclip.”

An author named Linda Hunt, however, is not so enthusiastic. She wrote *Secret Agenda: The United States Government, Nazi Scientists and Project Paperclip*, a relentlessly researched book that demanded that she evoke the Freedom of Information Act constantly to get relevant documents from the U.S. government.

From the arrival of the first German specialist in the U.S., a missile design engineer named Herbert Wagner, she didn’t see the operation as the gift to America that others believed it to be.

On “May 19, 1945,” she writes, “Wagner’s surreptitious arrival

marked the beginning of a massive immigration of Nazi scientists to the United States and a long, sordid chapter in postwar history. Had he been kept overseas, Wagner

‘PROJECT PAPERCLIP, IN DIRECT CONTRAVENTION OF OFFICIAL US POLICY, GAVE THE NAZI SCIENTISTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ESCAPE JUSTICE AND START AFRESH IN AMERICA.’

- RESEARCHER/AUTHOR

LINDA HUNT

almost certainly would have been questioned about his Nazi past in a denazification court. Instead he and many of his colleagues were able to take advantage of Project Paperclip, which, in direct contra-

vention of official US policy, gave the Nazi scientists an opportunity to escape justice and start afresh in America.”

She notes that this all took place while thousands of Jewish refugees remained on immigration wait-lists.

Kohn, himself a Jew, eventually was handed Operation Paperclip duties that required him to smuggle dozens of scientists past US Customs. “Every couple of weeks,” he writes in his memoirs, “I would have to go to New York and pick up a newly-arrived group of these scientists, sneak them by customs and the immigration authorities by permitting them, after I had ostentatiously looked in all directions, a mere glimpse of the orders I carried, stamped SECRET in large red letters, and then bring the Germans down to Fort Hunt by chartered bus.

“This work was given the code name Paperclip, and as the other activities of the post were phased out or transferred, it became the only important operation left at Fort

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Hunt.”

Kohn acknowledges that what started out as a “pretty straightforward military mission with clear-cut goals, objectives and limits” saw its goals “becoming more shadowy and the limits more elastic.”

“Project Paperclip,” he writes, “like a robot out of control, set its own policy and winked when a former Nazi was found among the German scientists.”

Kohn’s role as Paperclip pointman and his rank as chief intelligence officer of PO Box 1142 will make the rangers’ next visit to Pacific Grove, in their eyes, a very special one in their catalog of interviews.

“It’s a very special scope of knowledge he was briefed on and knowledgeable about,” Santucci says. “The interrogators were enlisted men, trained to deal with specialized information, which was compartmentalized. He saw over the integration of information ... which could only could happen at higher levels [with] somebody who is “really sworn to secrecy.”

His elevated insight has also necessitated a special deal with the Army not needed for most of their other interviews.

“We’re going to need a letter saying he is free of any secrecy agreements with the United States Army,” Santucci says, “that he is not only permitted to speak, but encouraged to.”

When told of the enthusiastic dedication that the George Washington Memorial Parkway rangers have brought to their search – and will bring to his interview – Kohn smiles an ornery grin that stretches all the



Major Arnold Kohn (1917-2009)
(Drawing by Paul Connors)

way from one bat-like ear to the other. “I’d believe about one-third of what they’re told,” he says, mimicking their subjects: “ ‘I got that secret out of him!’ ”

This is Kohn’s personal style of informed irreverence – the style that carries his memoirs, that dances in his eyes as he tells his favorite stories, that his native humility barely keeps in check. It’s also the style that defines what he facetiously calls his “Educational Newsletter,” which he circulates to a close group of friends and family. In recent missives, his irreverence is informed by post-Fort Hunt assignments, which included testing the success of the Chinese so-called “brainwashing” of American soldiers, coordinating spies in Korea, and researching the reliability of information obtained by forced interrogation.

He called his most recent offering, which went out July 27, a “Special

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Patriotic Newsletter,” with the sub headline “4 God and Country and Cold Cash.”

“Mr. George W. Bush has just announced a brand new set of rules for the interrogation of men who have been captured alive and put in prison. The CIA is not to torture them in the future. That would be wrong. They may be coaxed, tricked, threatened, frightened, manipulated and forced to answer questions (even if they may not know the answers, and must make one up) but keep it secret. And the taking of photographs of any prisoners being made ‘uncomfortable’ is strictly forbidden.”

He had this to write in the aftermath of media reports this spring about the British sailors captured by the Iranians: “We do not know what prompted Iran’s restraint. Whether it comes from that county’s strong religious beliefs, their strict moral codes, their civil laws or their culture. But it appears that the Evil Axis Iranians did not have anyone urinating on their Christian Bible, have them strip and wear a dog leash or have any of them ‘water-boarded.’”

Sitting at his computer sorting through online news sites, the old intelligence officer is still watching and listening, with his sense of humor intact. His irreverence speaks to a strategy he deployed as a sanity-protecting practice throughout his long military career.

His daughter, who is among those who look forward to receiving his newsletter every four or five weeks, gently chides her father: “Remember what you told me?” she says. “The best survival technique is a

sense of humor?”

“No,” Kohn says. But then he smiles knowingly, and kisses his daughter on the head moments later as she walks past him through the living room.

The vast majority of the surviving military personnel that were stationed at PO Box 1142 will gather in Alexandria, Virginia this fall. On Oct. 5, they will stand before a brand-new flagpole planted in precisely the same spot as the flagpole that stood at Fort Hunt during World War II. When an atomically calibrated clock strikes 11:42 a.m. on the dot, soldiers will fire off a cannon on loan from Arlington National Cemetery and a bugler will play. Other festivities will round out a full weekend.

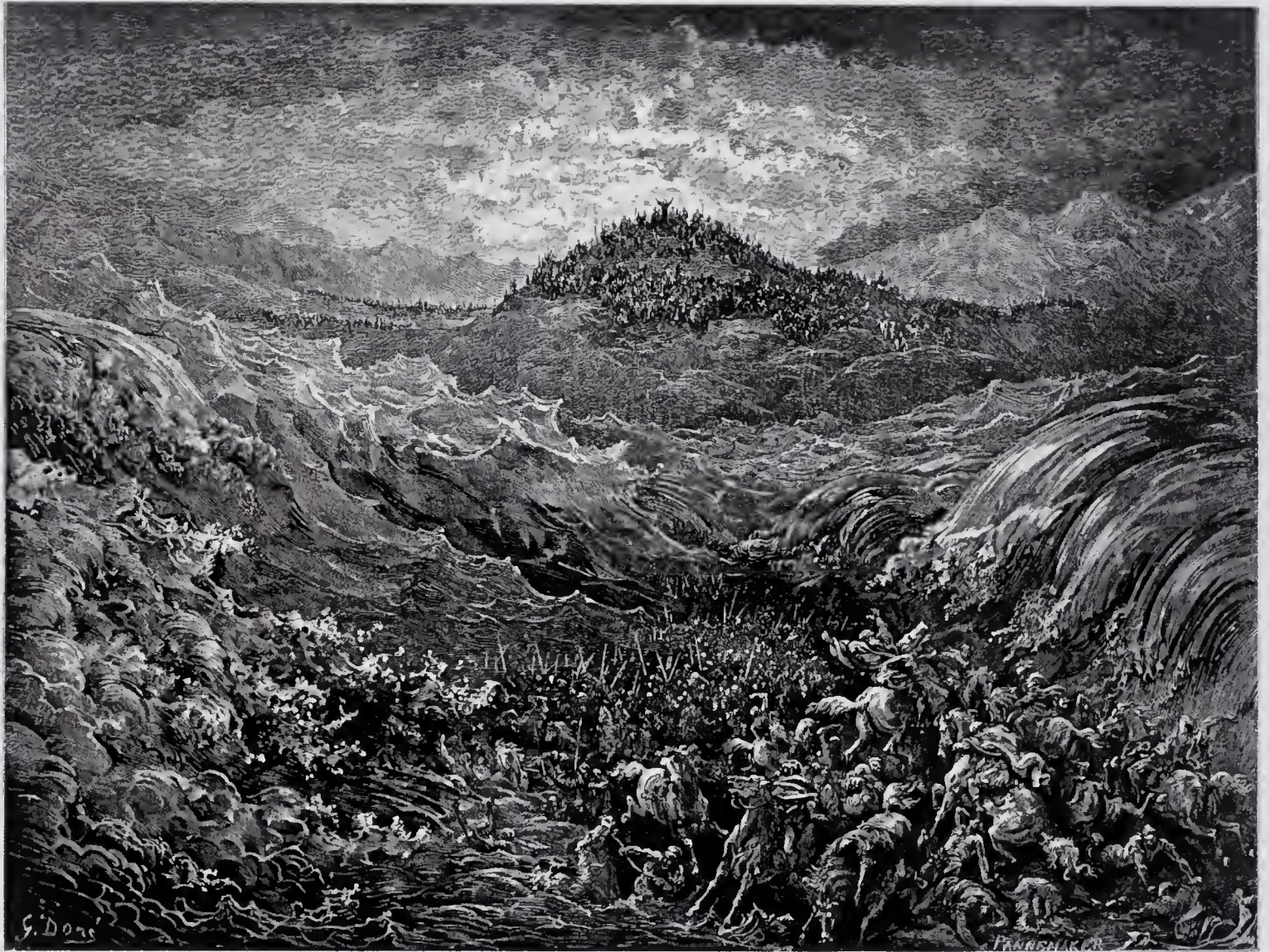
Kohn won’t be there. He and Helen are growing too frail to travel across the country. Besides, Ret. Maj. Arnold Kohn isn’t all that into ceremony. ☐

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Note: Major Arnold Kohn, U.S.A., Ret., died in his home on Tuesday, April 21, 2009, after a brief illness. He was 92 years old.

Source: http://www.monterey-countyweekly.com/news/cover/ret-maj-arnold-kohn-finally-tells-his-story-of-the/article_dbf9cdb2-66f5-5dbc-b045-dcae52e26d5c.html

NIUE 'EXODUS' COIN OPENS MULTI-YEAR BIBLICAL SERIES



Gustav Doré's classic wood engraving "The Egyptians Drowned in the Red Sea" is one of 241 illustrations he cut into wood blocks in 1866 to illustrate a new, deluxe edition in French of the Vulgate bible, known also as Le Grande Bible de Tours. The artwork is featured on the first issue of a 12-coin Biblical series issued by the island nation of Niue in 2015 and 2016.

Significant events of the Old and New Testaments are the focus of a Niue 12-coin bullion series issued in 2015 and 2016. The first coin, Exodus, depicts the flight of the Israelites and crashing waves of the Red Sea that drowned all their Egyptian pursuers.

The classic woodcut print of Gustave Doré (1832-1883) "The Egyptians Drowned in the Red Sea" is featured in great detail and in high

relief on the Exodus coin.

All of the coins in Niue's biblical series feature adaptations of Doré's woodcuts that were first created in 1866 to illustrate a new, deluxe edition in French of the Vulgate bible.

Niue is an island nation, population about 1,200, located 2,400 kilometers northeast of New Zealand and approximately halfway between Tonga and Samoa.

Continued

כז וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת-יָדוֹ עַל-הַיָּם, וַיָּשָׁב הַיָּם לִפְנוֹת בְּקֶרֶךְ לְאִיתָנוּ, וּמִצְרַיִם,
נָסִים לִקְרָאתוֹ; וַיִּנְעַר יְהוָה אֶת-מִצְרַיִם, בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם.

27 MOSES STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND OVER THE SEA,
AND AT DAYBREAK THE SEA WENT BACK TO ITS PLACE. THE
EGYPTIANS WERE FLEEING TOWARD IT, AND THE LORD
SWEPT THEM INTO THE SEA. **EXODUS 14**



The first issue in a 12-coin Biblical series struck for the island nation of Niue in the south Pacific ocean. Queen Elizabeth II is on the common obverse for all; on the reverse of the Exodus coin, Moses stands on a distant hill as the Red Sea swallows pursuing Egyptian forces.

Continued

Part of the nation's annual \$10.6 million annual gross product is driven by the sale of official commemorative coinage sold to collectors worldwide.

By issuing such coins, which are officially sanctioned but not meant for circulation, Niue follows a path already well travelled by other remote islands and island nations, including Palau, Tuvalu, Fiji, the Cook Islands and, occasionally, Pitcairn.

Each of the 2015 and 2016 coins in Niue's Biblical coin series is struck on a two-ounce .999 fine silver planchet. With a mintage of just 1,499 for each issue, each coin also features a rimless, high-relief

design in antique finish of iconic biblical scenes from the imagination of Doré.

The diameter of each coin is 39 millimeters - close to the 40.6 mm diameter of a U.S. American Eagle one-ounce silver bullion coin.

But at 7.0 mm thick, each two-ounce Niue Biblical series coin is more than twice the American Eagle's thickness of 2.98 mm.

The Scottsdale Mint struck the coins for Niue; various online dealers offer them for sale and/or resale.

The edge of each coin is struck with the coin's serial number, and each coin is shipped in a presentation case.

As the first release for the Niue

Continued



Niue's 2015 "David and Goliath" coin reverse, with David hoisting the head of his vanquished foe, above left. Above right, "The Ten Commandments" with Moses and the sacred tablet.



Niue's "The Pale Horse" and "The New Jerusalem" are two-ounce .999 fine silver coins issued by the island nation in its Biblical coin series of 2015.

Continued

12-coin series of 2015 and 2016, the image of Moses leading his people to safety establishes the iconic nature of each coin's image.

This series also includes "The Crucifixion" not shown here due to lack of space, and 2016's "The Last Supper" shown on next page.

Also included with the Exodus coin, as with all coins in the series, is a certificate of authenticity an image of Gustave Doré. On the Exodus coin, Doré's classic woodcut

print is the stunning "The Egyptians Drowned in the Red Sea."

According to information about the series, each of the coin's features artwork by Doré both on the coin and on an enclosed informational placard. ▢

Continued



Niue's 2016 Biblical Series coinage includes "Daniel in the Lion's Den" above, left, and Adam and Eve" above right, after they have been banished from the Garden of Eden." The coins all share a common obverse, with Raphael Maklouf's portrait of a young Queen Elizabeth II.



New Testament imagery is present on a third of Gustave Dore's plates printed in the 1866 edition of the Vulgate bible, including "The Last Supper" above left. At right, "The Good Samaritan."

CORRECTIONS

We apologize for errors in the last issue of *The Shekel*, as follows.

Page 1: The correct spelling of our Director's name is Danny Spungen;

Page 1: AINA was founded in 1967.

Page 9 (caption): The nine-spouted oil lamp is dated circa 70-200 CE.

Page 28: Authors should have been credited as Ira Rezak and Mel Wacks.

A.I.N.A. MarketPlace



The Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists (PAN) is a non-profit educational state organization founded in 1978 consisting of individuals and coin clubs throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States.

PAN membership is open to any individual or club interested in the study and collection of coins, currency, medals, tokens, and related material. The cost is \$12 per calendar year (clubs are free). You will receive our journal, *The Clarion* published three times per year and the PAN eNEWS, a free electronic newsletter.

PAN Coin Shows and Conventions occur every spring in early May and fall in late October at the Monroeville Convention Center, 209 Mall Blvd, Monroeville, PA 15146. There are more than 130 tables and 100 dealers eager to buy, sell, or trade coins, paper money, tokens, medals, gold, silver, and bullion.

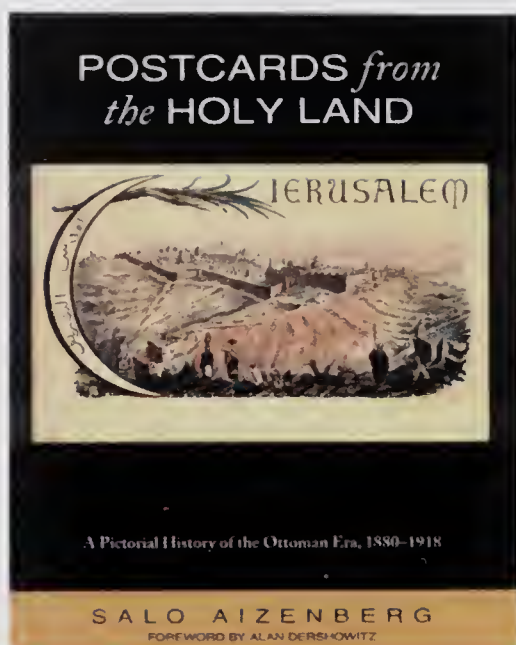
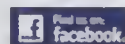
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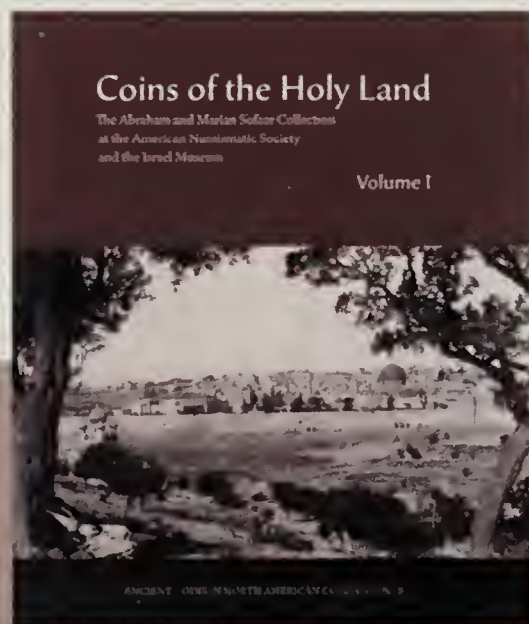
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Coins of the Holy Land:

The Abraham and Marian Sofaer Collection at the American Numismatic Society and the Israel Museum

American Numismatic Society Publications



Hardcover, 2 Volumes,
Vol. 1: 344 pp. Vol. 2: 244 pp., 238 plates
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ANS Member Price: US \$133
Ancient Coins in North American Collections 8 (ACNAC 8) 2013

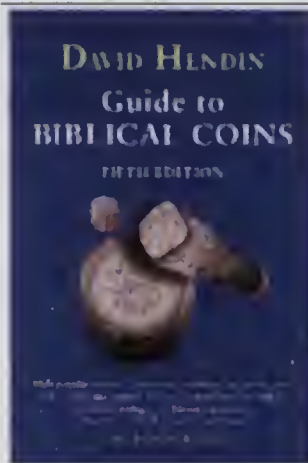
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The book was written by Ya'akov Meshorer with Gabriela Bijovsky and Wolfgang Fischer-Bossert, and edited by David Hendin and Andrew Meadows.

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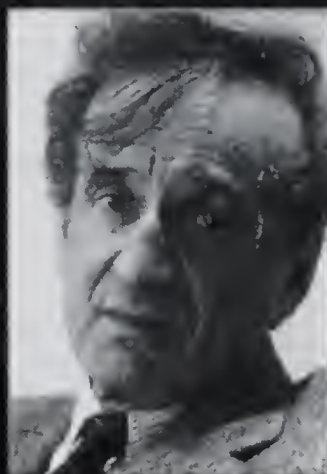
Publishes a bimonthly journal, has a library available to members, and an annual meeting at the ANA. TAMS and AINA jointly sponsor the Ben Odesser Award for the Best Article in "The Shekel". Dues are \$30 (U.S.), \$42 (Canada) and \$60 (Other Foreign). Send to: TAMS, c/o Mark Lighterman, 5224 W. State Rd 46, No. 408, Sanford, FL 32771.



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A numismatic remembrance of humanitarian

The Nobel Peace Prize for 1986 was awarded to Elie Wiesel for his work in becoming one of the most important spiritual leaders and guides in an age of violence, repression and racism.



Eliezer Wiesel was born in the Jewish town of Sighet in Transylvania, Romania, on September 20, 1928. He grew up speaking Yiddish and studied classical Hebrew from the time he could speak. After the German occupation in 1944, Elie and his family were sent to Auschwitz where his mother and youngest sister died in the gas chamber. In 1945, Elie and his father were sent to Buchenwald, where his father perished from dysentery and starvation. Elie did not learn that his two older sisters were alive until after the war had ended.

After the war, Wiesel moved to Paris to study literature and philosophy at the Sorbonne. He mastered French and became a journalist in Paris. Wiesel wrote a regular feature for the Israeli newspaper Yediot Aharonot that was very popular with readers in Israel. For ten years he observed a self-imposed vow of silence, but in 1955, he wrote down his wartime experiences in Yiddish in an 864-page work entitled "And the World Kept Silent." In 1956, while in New York to cover the UN, he was struck by a taxi and was confined to a wheelchair for one year. Unable to renew his travel documents, he applied successfully for a US citizenship. He remained in New York and became a writer for the Jewish Daily Forward, and continued to write books in French which began to win him an international reputation. He also took an increased interest in the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union. Wiesel first traveled to the USSR in 1965 and reported on his travels in "The Jews of Silence." His 1968 account of the Six Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors appeared as "A beggar in Jerusalem." He has also written further novels, plays, essays, biblical commentary and works on Jewish folklore and mysticism, many which are collected in the volumes "Legends of Our Times," "One Generation After" and "A Jew Today."

Elie Wiesel's writings have focused others on the plight of Jews around the world. Through telling of his own experiences he has made people aware of injustice, in an effort to prevent what happened during WWII from occurring again. Elie Wiesel survived forced labor,

APRIL 16, 1945.

Former prisoners of the 'little camp' in Buchenwald stare out from the wooden bunks in which they slept three to a 'bed.' Elie Wiesel is pictured in the second row of bunks, seventh from the left, next to a vertical beam.



Peace and Human Dignity



exhausting marches, starvation, disease and torture to become a world-renowned writer, teacher and spokesman for the oppressed. Wiesel's commitment to humanity, which originated in the suffering of the Jewish people, has been widened to embrace all repressed peoples and races. He is known for first using the word "Holocaust" as a collective term to describe the barbarism and inhumanity of Nazi death camps.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter appointed Elie Wiesel Chairman of the President's Commission of the Holocaust, a position he held until 1986. In 1985 he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Freedom. Since 1976, he has been Andrew Mellon Professor of Humanities at Boston University as well as a member of numerous boards of trustees and advisors. Elie Wiesel lives in New York City with his wife Marion and their son, Elisha.

"I SWORE NEVER TO BE SILENT WHENEVER AND WHEREVER HUMAN BEINGS ENDURE SUFFERING AND HUMILIATION. WE MUST ALWAYS TAKE SIDES. NEUTRALITY HELPS THE OPPRESSOR, NEVER THE VICTIM. SILENCE ENCOURAGES THE TORMENTOR, NEVER THE TORMENTED. SOMETIMES WE MUST INTERFERE. WHEN HUMAN LIVES ARE ENDANGERED, WHEN HUMAN DIGNITY IS IN JEOPARDY, NATIONAL BORDERS AND SENSITIVITIES BECOME IRRELEVANT. WHENEVER MEN OR WOMEN ARE PROSECUTED BECAUSE OF THEIR RACE, RELIGION, OR POLITICAL VIEWS, THAT PLACE MUST - AT THAT MOMENT - BECOME THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE."

Elie Wiesel

ELIE WIESEL

A LIFE AWAKENED

*AUTHOR, SURVIVOR,
NOBEL PRIZE WINNER
ELIE WIESEL: 1928 - 2016*



Photo by Eugene Daub

Elie Wiesel medal commemorating his induction into the Jewish American Hall of Fame in 1995. Designed by Alex Shagin.

EULOGY FOR ELIE WIESEL

(Adapted from the Nobel Peace Prize committee's announcement that Wiesel had won the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize, perhaps the most distinguished of many awards earned by the author and activist.)

In 1945, on the ashes left behind after the sacrificial flames which annihilated six million Jews, sat the seventeen-year-old Elie Wiesel, an only son of Abraham, an Isaac who once again had escaped a sacrificial death on Mount Moriah at the last moment. From the abyss of the death camps he came as a messenger to mankind - not with a message of hate and revenge, but with one of brotherhood and atonement. He be-

came a powerful spokesman for the view of mankind and the unlimited humanity which is, at all times, the basis of a lasting peace. Elie Wiesel was not only the man who survived - he was also the spirit which conquered. In him we saw a man who had climbed from utter humiliation to become one of our most important spiritual leaders and guides.

The Nobel Committee believes it is vital that we have such guides in an age when terror, repression, and racial discrimination still exist in the world.

With the presentation of the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize, it is fitting that we honor the man, the Jew who dedicat-

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Elie Wiesel won the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize - a representative medal is shown above. Designed by Norway's Gustav Vigeland (and assisted by engraver Erik Lindberg), the Nobel Peace Prize medal was Vigeland's only medal. A statue of his from a massive garden of his sculptures is shown above. For the 1902 inaugural award, the medal was struck in 23-carat gold and weighed 192 grams; from 1980 onward the composition was changed to 18 carats and 196 grams. The Nobel Peace Prize medal diameter has always been 66 millimeters or 2.598 inches.

Continued

ed his life to fighting anything that could lead to a recurrence of that same tragedy.

Elie Wiesel was born on the 30th of September 1928 in the Romanian town of Sighet in the Carpathians. He and his three sisters grew up in a peaceful family which was strongly bound by Jewish traditions and the Jewish religion. Elie was fourteen years old when the deportation of Hungarian Jews began. Sighet was now occupied by Hungary, and

the town's Jewish population was packed, in the usual humiliating way, into goods wagons and transported to Auschwitz. There he saw his mother and youngest sister sent to the gas chambers. Later, his father died while being transported to Buchenwald.

Through his books Elie Wiesel gave us not only an eyewitness account of what happened, but also an analysis of the evil powers which lay behind the events. His main concern

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is the question of what measures we can take to prevent a recurrence of these events.

The terrors he encountered in the death camps,

which were slowly revealed to the rest of the world, were qualitatively new in the history of mankind. The Holocaust was a war within a war, a world in itself, a kingdom of darkness where there existed an evil so monstrous that

it shattered all political and moral codes.

It is true that previous regimes had used brutal punishment against real or imagined opponents, but behind such measures there was always an element of logical - though perverted - reasoning. The punishment was the result of some injury or offence, either actual or potential.

But for the Jews - and, to a certain extent, the Romanies - the situation was different. Among the relics of the Nazi regime have been found registration forms used when arresting Jews. The usual details were noted down: name, age, sex, religion, address, and, of course, reason for arrest. In the last case only one word was entered, the word JEW.

The enormity of what happened is thus not only the sheer number of the victims; it is not only the

existence of factory-like slaughter houses. No, the enormity lies in the philosophy which made this "industry" possible. It is this abomination, this distortion of all things human

that Elie Wiesel wanted us to understand.

His mission was not to gain the world's sympathy for the victims or the survivors. His aim is to awaken our conscience.

Our indifference to evil makes us partners in the crime. That is the

reason for his attack on indifference and his insistence on measures aimed at preventing a new holocaust.

We know that the unimaginable has happened. What are we doing now to prevent it happening again? Do not forget, do not sink into a new blind indifference, but involve yourselves in truth and justice, in human dignity, freedom, and atonement. That is this Peace Prize laureate's message to us.

Elie Wiesel's sojourn in the death camps ended in Buchenwald in the spring of 1945, when the prisoners were liberated by American troops. Together with a group of other Jewish children he was sent to France. His stay in France was part convalescence, part study: he learned French and studied at the Sorbonne before becoming a correspondent

‘ELIE WIESEL’S MISSION
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OR THE SURVIVORS.
HIS AIM IS TO AWAKEN
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- 1986 NOBEL PEACE
PRIZE

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with a Tel Aviv newspaper.

He travelled to the USA as a journalist, became a correspondent with a New York Jewish paper, and took American citizenship in 1963. In the meantime he had published a number of books, of which *Night* (1956) was the first.

His writings, which have been translated into many languages, include 26 full-length books, together with a large number of articles, essays, and lectures. He was awarded a number of honors and prizes.

Elie Wiesel was an honorary professor at City College in New York and hds, in addition, a professorship in humanities at Boston University.

He was the leader of the American Holocaust Commission sparked by the President of the U.S. A.

Biographical details are perhaps unnecessary in Elie Wiesel's case - he is best presented through his own writings and through his actions in pursuit of his calling.

Naturally enough, it was his own people's fate which formed the starting point for his involvement. During the years, however, his message attained a universal character.

Presented as it is in different varia-

tions and in different contexts, it stands now as communication from one human being to humankind. Its involvement is limitless, and encompasses all who suffer, wherever they might be.

The fight for freedom and human dignity - whether in Latin America,

Asia, Europe or South Africa - became his life's purpose.

This involvement was based on a strong feeling of duty to the lessons history teaches us. It has been said that peoples or cultures who forget their history are doomed to repeat it, and it is against

the background of his own experiences that Elie Wiesel warned us of this.

We cannot allow ourselves to forget the fate of those who died. If we do forget, we commit them to death once again, and become responsible ourselves for making their lives - and their deaths - meaningless. We cannot allow ourselves to be deluded into believing that the unthinkable will not happen. For it has happened once before. History has warned us.

The duty and responsibility which Elie Wiesel preached were not primarily concerned with the fear of the terrors of the past repeating themselves. It was much more an

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- 1986 NOBEL PEACEPRIZE
ANNOUNCEMENT, 1986

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engagement directed at preventing the possible victory of evil forces in the future. The creative force in this process is not hate and revenge, but rather a longing for freedom, a love of life and a respect for human dignity. Or as Elie Wiesel has said himself: “I will conquer our murderers by attempting to reconstruct what they destroyed”.

Elie Wiesel sat thus in the ashes after Auschwitz.

The storm and fire had terrorised his life. Everything was in ruins. His family was annihilated. Two of his sisters were alive, though he was not aware of this at the time. He was homeless and without a homeland.

Even his identity as a human being was undermined - he was now prisoner number A 7713, a sort of shipwrecked sailor on a burnt coast, without hope, without a future. Only the naked memories remained.

And, like Job in the ashes, he sat there and questioned his God - cast his agonised “WHY?” towards heaven: Why did this have to happen? And why should I have survived? Dear God, why were six million of your own chosen people sent to their deaths? Where were you when they hanged twelve-year-olds in Auschwitz, or burned small children alive in Birkenau?

He was seventeen years old, and

how could a life be lived after what had happened? The sorrow was so great, and the experience of life so bitter. Indeed, he was only seventeen, but was already the lonely prophet of the Lamentations: “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow”.

But he was alive. And in time it occurred to him that there could be a purpose behind it - that he was to be a witness, the one who would

‘I WILL CONQUER OUR
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ING TO RECONSTRUCT
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- ELIE WIESEL

pass on the account of what had happened so that the dead would not have died in vain and so that the living could learn.

The problem was that the story was impossible to tell in full. No human being could accurately describe the terror in the death camps. To tell could thus easily become a betrayal of the dead. But to remain silent would be an even greater betrayal.

He remained silent for ten years. Then his profession as a journalist brought him into contact with the French poet and Nobel prizewinner, Francois Mauriac. This meeting led him to break his silence - at first with *Night* and then in the course of very short time with *Dawn*, *The Accident*, *The Town Beyond the Wall*, *The Gates of the Forest*, the play *Zalmen*, *A Beggar in Jerusalem*, and his credo *Ani Maamin* - “I believe”.

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All Elie Wiesel's books and publications are concerned with the same theme - the Holocaust is present in them all.

In the beginning everything is night and dark, On the last page of *Night* he stands in front of the mirror and sees a face which is like a bleached skull. The problem is constantly the same painful question: "How can one live a meaningful life under the weight of such agonising memories?" Was there no way forward to day and to light?

The answer arises slowly in the timeline of his books. Man raises himself up. The spirit conquers. The answer to the riddle of the night is not hate based on what has happened, but a believing and hopeful rebirth into future events. This is what he calls *The Refound Song* which appears in his credo, his *Ani Maamin: I believe in God - in spite of God! I believe in Mankind - in spite of Mankind! I believe in the Future - in spite of the Past!*

It is on account of this inspiration that Elie Wiesel has so successfully reached out with his message. We doubt whether any other individual, through the use of such quiet speech, has achieved more or been more widely heard.

The words are not big, and the voice which speaks them is low. It is a voice of peace we hear. But the power is intense.

Truly, the little spark will not be put out, but will become a burning torch for our common belief in the

future. Truly, prisoner number A 7713 became a human being once again - a human being dedicated to humanity.

And, once again, we have met the young Jew at the ford Jabbok in the book of *Genesis* - he who in the darkness of night wrestled with God, he who refused to release his opponent before his opponent blessed him and who left that place at dawn marked for life on his hip.

It was to this man that the promise of the future was made from on high: "Thy name shall be called... Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed".

In recognition of this particular human spirit's victory over the powers of death and degradation, and as a support to the rebellion of good against the evil in the world, the Norwegian Nobel Committee presented the Nobel Peace Prize to Elie Wiesel in 1986.

We did this on behalf of millions - from all peoples and races.

We did it in deep reverence for the memory of the dead.

We did it also with the deep felt hope that the prize would make some contribution to forward the cause of peace. ▢



POET, SINGER LEONARD COHEN DIES

Leonard Cohen, whose Jewish-infused poetry and songs inspired generations around the globe, died Nov. 7, 2016 at age 82.

Photo: Wikimedia

Leonard Cohen, the Canadian singer-songwriter whose Jewish-infused work became a soundtrack for melancholy, has died. He was 82.

As reported in a benchmark obituary written by Ron Kampeas for the JTF news service, and reprinted in numerous other mainstream publications, the news from the Leonard Cohen website was short and sad.

"It is with profound sorrow we report that legendary poet, songwriter and artist Leonard Cohen has passed away.

"We have lost one of music's most revered and prolific visionaries."

The public notice did not give a cause of death but said there would be a funeral later in Los Angeles.

For collectors, there are numerous coins issued by Israel that relate to the stories told by Cohen in many of his songs.

As Kampeas recounted in the story of Cohen's life, the impact of this poet/lyricist/musician's decades of performances becomes ever more clear as the parameters of his influence are limned.

Cohen, a Montreal native born in 1934, played folk guitar by age 15, learning the resistance chestnut *The Partisan* from an older friend while working at a camp.

"We sang together every morning, going through *The People's Song Book* from cover to cover," Cohen recalled in the first of his *Best Of* compilations in 1975.

And then something powerful struck him. Yet he understated the impact in a characteristic Cohen line.

"I developed the curious notion that the Nazis were overthrown by music," Cohen said.

Branching out from traditional perspective was a hallmark of Cohen's

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At right: David plays the harp for King Saul on this 2010 Israeli coin. In one of his most famous songs, "Hallelujah", Leonard Cohen evoked Biblical images that have appeared on coins of Israel and Niue. "Now I've heard there was a secret chord That David played, and it pleased the Lord."



At left, Samson and Delilah on 2010 silver coin of Niue. "Your faith was strong but you needed proof You saw her bathing on the roof She tied you to a kitchen chair She broke your throne, and she cut your hair And from your lips, she drew Hallelujah"

Continued

life, lyrics, recordings and performances.

His multitudes of American fans may not have been aware of Cohen's deep and lifelong connection with Israel and Judaism.

American Jews might have been unaware that although Cohen was a practicing Buddhist, he also deeply believed in his lifelong connection to Judaism that had sustained his people through extraordinary crises over the millennia.

Cohen performed to sold-out crowds when he travelled to Israel, and he was a strong supporter of the Israeli Defense Forces, performing benefit concerts for the IDF.

While he was deeply concerned about the many challenges of reaching peace in the region, Cohen saw no conflict in his simultaneous holding of divergent views that others

might find untenable.

Perhaps in some ways, that huge range helped infuse his music with strong overtones of melancholy. Not everyone was a fan. But those who were, supported him by buying his recordings to the end of his life.

Kampeas writes: "As a student at McGill University, Cohen became part of Montreal's burgeoning alternative art scene, one bursting with nervous energy at a time that tensions between Quebec's French and English speakers were coming to the fore.

"His influences included Irving Layton, the seminal Canadian Jewish poet who taught at McGill and, like Cohen, grappled with the tensions between the secular world and the temptations of faith.

"Cohen began to publish poetry and then novels, and was noticed by

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the national Canadian press.

Moving to New York in the late 1960s — his song “*Chelsea Hotel*” is about his stay and that notorious refuge for the inspired, the insane and the indigent — he began to put his words to music.

“*Suzanne*,” about the devastating platonic affair with a friend’s wife that was a factor in his leaving Montreal, was recorded by Judy Collins and became a hit, launching his career.

Cohen sang in his limited bass and wrote his songs so he could sing them. They would have been dirges but for their surprising lyrical turns and reckoning with joy in unexpected places.

In “*Bird on the Wire*,” one of his most covered songs, he recovers from a crippling guilt when he finds inspiration in a beggar, and then in a prostitute: “*And a pretty woman, leaning in her darkened door/ She cried to me, ‘Hey why not ask for more?’*”

Cohen embraced Buddhism but never stopped saying he was Jewish. His music more often than not dealt directly not just with his faith but with his Jewish people’s story.

His most famous song, covered hundreds of times, is “*Hallelujah*” — he has said its unpublished verses are endless, but in its recorded version is about the sacred anguish felt by King David as he contemplates the beauty of the forbidden Bathsheba.

As noted by Julie Zauzmer in *The Washington Post*’s “Acts of Faith” section, “‘*Hallelujah*’” has been on the lips of the Jewish people since the days of the original psalmist. Leonard Cohen set this Hebrew word and these Hebrew stories to

music that everyone wanted to sing - from Bon Jovi to Willie Nelson to Justin Timberlake.”

In a way, that was not entirely unexpected - Cohen was born into and raised in a family of Talmudic scholars and synagogue founders, Zauzmer writes.

“Cohen remained deeply connected to his Jewish faith throughout his life and became likely *the most prominent* (emphasis added) Jewish songwriter of the modern era.

“A few others - Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Billy Joel - came from Jewish backgrounds but largely left the faith.”

Cohen kept the faith, and extended a tradition of Jewish songwriting that penned “many of the most popular, beloved and Christian songs” of the 20th century: Irving Berlins’ “*God Bless America*” and Johnny Marks’ “*Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*”.

As the *Post*’s Zauzmer notes, “Only Cohen wrote such popular music in such a distinctly Jewish voice.”

Biographer Kampeas continues: “Cohen’s version of “*Hallelujah*,” released in 1984, did well in Europe (in a video on German TV he is backed by a children’s choir hiding behind a faux Greek set).

“John Cale recorded a piano-driven version for a Cohen tribute album in 1991. Jeff Buckley heard that version and used it as the basis for his own six-minute cover, reinterpreting on his guitar the arpeggios Cale had used to accompany the song.

“Running longer than six minutes, Buckley’s version became the go-to song in the late 1990s for extended TV show montages depicting trauma and melancholy.

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Cale is credited in the soundtrack for the 2001 blockbuster movie “Shrek” (nearly \$500 million worldwide gross), but the song was sung by Rufus Wainwright. That version introduced “*Hallelujah*” to tens of millions of people, blowing the doors open for everybody to know of Leonard Cohen’s singular genius.

And like the biblical source of the lyrics, “*Hallelujah*” is heard at a particularly poignant moment of love, and loss, in the film.

Cohen’s song “*First We Take Manhattan*,” recorded in the late 1980s when Cohen was living much of his time in Europe, plumbs the anger of a modern Jew traveling through a postwar consumerist Europe that has become adept at ignoring its Jewish ghosts:

*“I love your body and your spirit
and your clothes*

*But you see that line there moving
through the station?*

*I told you, I told you, told you, I
was one of those.”*

Cohen was droll, but also reverent: Each of his explanations of his songs on 1975’s “*Best Of*” is sardonic except for one, “*Who by Fire*.”

“This is based on a prayer recited on the Day of Atonement,” he said.

Cohen, in his 70s in the late 2000s, again began to tour and record; a manager had bilked him of much of his fortune. He released his final album, “*You Want It Darker*,” in October 2016.

Cohen often toured Israel, but encountered resistance beyond his range at times. Under pressure from the boycott Israel movement to cancel a 2009 concert, Cohen instead donated its proceeds - much needed by him - to a group advanc-



Singer/songwriter Leonard Cohen wears the rank of Companion in the Order of Canada, presented to him by Governor General Adrienne Clarks during a ceremony in Ottawa on October 24, 2003.

ing dialogue between Palestinians and Jews.

Tickets to the stadium at Ramat Gan sold out in minutes. His Israeli fans embraced him that September night, and he returned the love, sprinkling the concert with Hebrew and readings from scripture and ending it with the priestly blessing.

In August he wrote an emotional letter to his former girlfriend and muse Marianne Ihlen, who had died in late July, suggesting he, too, was ready to embrace his death.

In October, 2016, in a profile of Cohen in *The New Yorker*, Bob Dylan compared his fellow singer-songwriter to Irving Berlin - linking three iconic Jewish musicians in one poignant assessment.

Cohen is survived by a son and a daughter. □

Adapted from JTA News and Features, The Washington Post and USA Today.

FOUNDING FATHER DIES

— SHIMON PERES —

(1923-2016)

‘There are few people who we share this world with who change the course of human history, not just through their role in human events, but because they expand our moral imagination and force us to expect more of ourselves. My friend Shimon was one of those people.

Shimon Peres once said that, “I learned that public service is a privilege that must be based on moral foundations.” Tonight, Michelle and I join people across Israel, the United States and around the world in honoring the extraordinary life of our dear friend Shimon Peres—a Founding Father of the State of Israel and a statesman whose commitment to Israel’s security and pursuit of peace was rooted in his own unshakeable moral foundation and unflagging optimism.

I will always be grateful that I was able to call Shimon my friend. I first visited him in Jerusalem when I was a senator, and when I asked for his advice, he told me that while people often say that the future belongs to the young, it’s the present that really belongs to the young. “Leave the future to me,” he said, “I have time.” And he was right.



President Barack Obama pins the Medal of Freedom to Shimon Peres in a formal ceremony at the White House, June 25, 2014.

Whether it was during our conversations in the Oval Office, walking together through Yad Vashem, or when I presented him with America’s highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom, Shimon always looked to the future. He was guided by a vision of the human dignity and progress that he knew people of

goodwill could advance together. He brought young people from around the world together because he knew they could carry us closer to our ideals of justice and equality.

Shimon was the essence of Israel itself—the courage of Israel’s fight for independence, the optimism he shared with his wife Sonya as they helped make the desert bloom, and the perseverance that led him to serve his nation in virtually every position in government across the entire life of the State of Israel. As Americans, we are in his debt because, having worked with every U.S. president since John F. Kennedy, no one did more over so many years as Shimon Peres to build the alliance between our two countries—an unbreakable alliance that today is closer and

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stronger than it has ever been.

Perhaps because he had seen Israel surmount overwhelming odds, Shimon never gave up on the possibility of peace between Israelis, Palestinians and Israel's neighbors—not even after the heartbreak of the night in Tel Aviv that took Yitzhak Rabin. “Dear friends,” he told us during my visit to Israel three years ago, “after everything I have seen in my life, I earned the right to believe that peace is attainable.” Tonight, I can think of no greater tribute to his life than to renew our commitment to the peace that we know is possible. Our thoughts are with his children Zvia, Yoni and

Chemi, their families and all who loved and admired Shimon Peres, of blessed memory.

A light has gone out, but the hope he gave us will burn forever. Shimon Peres was a soldier for Israel, for the Jewish people, for justice, for peace, and for the belief that we can be true to our best selves - to the very end of our time on Earth, and in the legacy that we leave to others. For the gift of his friendship and the example of his leadership, todah rabah, Shimon.” ׀

The foregoing is a speech by President Barack Obama honoring Shimon Peres in 2014. Shimon Peres died on September 28, 2016.

US AND ISRAEL ISSUE OFFICIAL MEDALS HONORING SHIMON PERES

Israel State Medal will be available in 2017 in bronze (48mm, 2,999 max.), silver (.999 fine, 50mm, 999 max.) and gold (.9999 fine, 50mm, 199 max.) from The Holy Land Mint. Designed by Ruben Nutels, sculpted by Tidhar Dagan.

Shimon Peres Congressional Gold Medal awarded to him on Jun 25, 2014. Obverse by Don Everhart, reverse by Joseph Menna. Three-inch bronze version available from U.S. Mint for \$39.95.



To recognize and honor one of the founders of the modern state of Israel, an official State Medal will be issued in 2017 to pay homage and perpetuate the memory of the Shimon Peres, who passed away on Sept. 28, 2016, Elul 25, 5776.

Peres served his nation long after he helped establish the nation. He served in many senior posts; including Prime Minister, and the ninth President of Israel.

The Shimon Peres medal will be issued by the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation. Designed by Ruben Nutels, engraved by Tidhar Dagan, and made by The Holy Land Mint, the Medals will be issued early in 2017 in bronze (48mm, max. 2,999), .999 fine silver (50mm, 2 troy oz., max. 999), and .9999 fine gold (50mm, 2 troy oz., max. 199). Orders are being accepted by The Holy Land Mint, (www.israelmint.com). ׀

'ISRAEL' 2016 COINS STRUCK BY REPUBLIC OF PALAU



An Emperor angelfish is portrayed on a 2016 Republic of Palau \$5 commemorative coin, one of four in a series issued by The Holy Land Mint in 2016. All feature tropical fish of the Red sea and a Hebrew inscription. Each coin has one ounce of .999 fine silver.

In 2015, The Holy Land Mint (also known as the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation) lost its exclusive contract to distribute commemorative coins issued by the Bank of Israel.

As a result, Israel has not issued any commemorative coins thus far in 2016, stating that they will not do so until a new distributor is selected.

However, to fill in the gap, The Holy Land Mint has issued colorful commemorative coins that at first glance look like Israel commemorative coins - they have an Israeli subject (Red Sea Marine Life), an Israeli designer (Meir Eshel) and Hebrew inscriptions.

But the other side of the coin

reveals that these \$5 coins were minted by The Holy Land Mint for the Republic of Palau.

The Republic of Palau is an independent nation in the Caroline islands of Micronesia, located a little more than 1,000 miles east of the Philippines.

The reefs and lagoons of the 250 islands of Palau are considered to be among the world's finest diving locations, and that attraction figures significantly in the small nation's economy.

Palau also has created an industry of striking commemorative coins for many other nations, often featuring sea creatures from the reefs and lagoons of Palau. In this case,

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A Lionfish is portrayed on a 2016 Republic of Palau \$5 commemorative coin, one of four in a series to be issued by The Holy Land Mint in 2016. Another in the series features the Regal angelfish. A fourth has yet to be struck. The coins each contain one ounce of .999 fine silver. At top, an aerial view of the clear Pacific waters of Palau. (Courtesy Palau Dive Adventures).

Continued

the tropical fish of the Red Sea are featured.

Three of the four coins to be issued in 2016 are shown here. Another set of four coins in the series is scheduled to be issued in 2017.

The Holy Land Mint indicates that these coins are Proof quality,

with a mintage of 5,000 each, and a metallic content of One oz. of .999 fine silver.

They sell for about \$100 each. □

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INQUIRIES:

David Michaels
Director, Ancient Coins
310-492-8615
DMichaels@HA.com



Sam Spiegel
Manager, Sr. Numismatist
214-409-1524
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